

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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P R 120217Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2725

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: POLITICAL NOTES: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 0797 (DTG 120940Z FEB 76), (B) KUALA LUMPUR
0210 (DTG 130610Z JAN 76), (C) KUALA LUMPUR 1067 (DTG 260827Z
FEB 76)

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE TRANSMITS POLITICAL NOTES ON
THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS: (A) RENEWED STUDENT DISTURBANCE AT
MIT; (B) GHAZALI RECEIVES SWEDISH AWARD FOR HANDLING OF
JRA INCIDENT; (C) LATE PRIME MINISTER'S SON BECOMES MP;
(D) JAMES WONG TO MEET WITH PM?; (E) NATIONAL FRONT MP
ARRESTED FOR CORRUPTION; (F) CHINESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER
CALLS FOR U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN SEA; (G) NEW ZEALAND DEPUTY
PM TO VISIT MALAYSIA. END SUMMARY.

2. ANOTHER STUDENT DISTURBANCE AT MIT. SHAH ALAM
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CAMPUS OF GOVERNMENT-RUN MARA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

(MIT), WHERE MAJOR STUDENT UNREST LAST JANUARY FORCED CLOSURE OF FACILITY FOR NUMBER OF WEEKS, WAS SCENE OF SHORT LIVED STUDENT DISTURBANCE MARCH 8-9 (SEE KL 0210, DTG 130610Z JAN 76). ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS A GROUP OF "STUDENT ACTIVISTS" ENTERED CAMPUS EARLY EVENING MARCH 8, OBTAINED KEYS TO ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, "RANSACKED" DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S OFFICE AND SEIZED AND BURNED FILES AND RE-ADMISSION FORMS, INCLUDING FORMS FOR STUDENTS INVOLVED IN JANUARY TROUBLES TO "SHOW CAUSE" WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BE EXPELLED FOR THEIR BEHAVIOR. PROTESTORS CRITICIZED ADMINISTRATION AND CALLED FOR REMOVAL OF MIT DIRECTOR, DATUK HAJI LOKMAN MUSA, AND REINSTATEMENT OF SEVERAL COURSES DROPPED FROM MIT CURRICULUM. ALTHOUGH STUDENT PROTESTORS SUCCEEDED IN RALLYING ABOUT 100 STUDENTS TO THEIR FOLD, THEY FAILED TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FROM THE APPROXIMATELY 2,000 OTHER STUDENTS HOUSED AT THE CAMPUS. ORDER WAS RESTORED EARLY MORNING MARCH 9 AND SIX PEOPLE (FIVE UNREGISTERED STUDENTS AND ONE WHO HAD BEEN EXPELLED) WERE DETAINED BY POLICE FOR INSTIGATING THE AFFAIR. RIOT POLICE (FEDERAL RESERVE UNIT) NOW ARE STATIONED AT MAIN GATE TO CAMPUS.

3. COMMENT: THIS INCIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE FIZZLED OUT PRETTY MUCH AS REPORTED BY PRESS. NEWLY NAMED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMED, IN HIS CONCURRENT ROLE AS EDUCATION MINISTER, HAS TAKEN A HARD LINE AGAINST STUDENT PROTESTERS AT MIT AND IN THIS INSTANCE VOWED THAT AGITATORS WILL BE DEALT WITH FIRMLY. ALTHOUGH NOT ENDEARING HIM TO STUDENTS HIS ATTITUDE SEEMS TO BE WIDELY SUPPORTED IN UMNO AND AMONG OTHER MALAY ELEMENTS. RECENT TRANSFER OF THREE EXTRANEIOUS COURSES (AND SEVERAL HUNDRED STUDENTS) TO AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY REPORTEDLY MARKS FIRST STEP TOWARD RATIONALIZING CURRICULA AT THIS INSTITUTION WHICH ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO PREPARE "BUMIPUTRAS" (ETHNIC MALAYS) TO COMPETE IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT FIELDS. ALSO NOTEWORTHY IS FACT THAT SIX PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS CURRENTLY TEACH AT MIT, WITH AN ADDITIONAL SIX PCV'S SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE THERE IN APRIL. FINALLY, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT INCLUDED AMONG STUDENT DISSIDENTS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JANUARY TROUBLES WAS A GROUP OF REFORM-MINDED ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST STUDENTS KNOWN AS THE "DAKWA" -- "ACCUSATORY" -- GROUP WHICH HAS BEEN CREATING SOMEWHAT OF A STIR IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

4. GHAZALI RECEIVES SWEDISH AWARD. HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER TAN SRI GHAZALI SHAFIE WAS PRESENTED ROYAL INSIGNIA OF THE ORDER OF THE NORTHERN STAR, GRAND CROSS BY SWEDISH

CHARGE CARL GUSTAV BEVE IN FEB 21 CEREMONY IN KL FOR HIS ROLE IN ASSISTING IN RELEASE OF HOSTAGES HELD BY JAPANESE RED ARMY IN INCIDENT AT AIA BUILDING LAST AUGUST. IN ACCEPTING AWARD, HE NOTED THAT PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM REMAINED UNRESOLVED, REMARKING THAT "IN THIS WE HAVE NOT PROCEEDED VERY FAR. WE NEED TO THINK HARD ON TERRORISM MANAGEMENT METHODS AND HARDER STILL ON PREVENTION OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTIC ACTIVITIES." SUBSEQUENTLY, SPEAKING AT MARCH 3 AWARDS CEREMONY ORGANIZED BY AMERICAN EMBASSY MALAYSIAN EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION FOR SECURITY GUARD AND TWO POLICEMAN WOUNDED IN AIA INCIDENT, GHAZALI NOTED THAT JRA PENETRATION HAD FORCED AUTHORITIES TO TIGHTEN SECURITY AT ENTRY POINTS DESPITE POSSIBLE INCONVENIENCE TO PEOPLE (I.E., TOURISTS).

5. LATE PM'S SON BECOMES MP. DATO MOHAMED NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL FAZAK, 22, BECAME NEWEST AND YOUNGEST MEMBER OF DEWAN RAKYAT (LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT) WHEN, AS UMNO'S NOMINEE, HE WAS ELECTED UNOPPOSED FEB 21 TO PEKAN, PAHANG, SEAT VACATED UPON DEATH OF HIS FATHER. NAJIB CURRENTLY IS EMPLOYED ON STAFF OF PETRONAS (NATIONAL OIL COMPANY) AS A SPECIAL ASSISTANT. (COMMENT: WITH PROCESS OF DEIFICATION OF LATE PRIME MINISTER TUN ABDUL RAZAK WELL UNDERWAY IT IS UNSURPRISING THAT HIS ELDEST SON WAS ENDORSED TO SUCCEED HIM IN PARLIAMENT, DESPITE GRUMBLINGS BY SOME UMNO REGULARS WHO RESENTED THAT THEY WERE PASSED OVER IN FAVOR OF POLITICAL NEOPHYTE.)

6. JAMES WONG TO MEET WITH PM? FURTHER TO REF C AND PREVIOUS REPORTING OF INDICATIONS OPPOSITION SARAWAK NATIONAL PARTY (SNAP) MAY BE ABOUT TO JOIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NATIONAL FRONT COALITION, SNAP OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFFS MARCH 9 THAT HE WAS VISITING KL AS "ADVANCE MAN" TO ARRANGE MEETING BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND SNAP DEPUTY PRESIDENT JAMES WONG TO TAKE UP THIS MATTER. HE DENIED, HOWEVER, REPORT THAT NF SECRETARY GENERAL (EX-AGRICULTURE MINISTER) GHAFAR BABA'S MID-FEBRUARY TRIP TO SARAWAK WAS RELATED TO DISCUSSIONS ON SNAP ENTERING THE NF; RATHER (AS SNAP OFFICIAL SAW IT) IT WAS AIMED AT OBTAINING CHIEF MINISTER RAHMAN YAKUB'S SUPPORT FOR GHAFAR'S (UNSUCCESSFUL) CANDIDACY FOR DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER POST. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE SNAP OFFICIAL WAS DEFINITELY UPBEAT ON EVENTUAL PROSPECTS FOR SNAP TO JOIN THE RULING OF COALITION, FACT HE WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN GETTING APPOINTMENT WITH PM TO ARRANGE MEETING FOR JAMES WONG WITH PM SUGGESTS HUSSEIN

ONN IS PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER MATTERS AND A BREAK-
THROUGH IN MERGER TALKS MAY NOT BE IMMINENT.)

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7. NATIONAL FRONT MP ARRESTED FOR CORRUPTION. NATIONAL FRONT MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR BRUAS, PERAK, CONSTITUENCY, SU LIAN YU, CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER OF PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP) WAS ARRESTED IN IPOH MARCH 10 ON 17 CHARGES UNDER THE PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION ACT. (COMMENT: SU ORIGINALLY WAS ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT ON PPP TICKET IN 1969, AND ALSO FROM 1969-74 SERVED AS PERAK STATE ASSEMBLYMAN. HE IS THE ONLY MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FROM THE MINISCULE IPOH-BASED PPP, A FORMER OPPOSITION PARTY THAT JOINED NATIONAL FRONT BEFORE 1974 ELECTIONS IN WHICH IT LOST THREE OF ITS FOUR PARLIAMENTARY SEATS.)

8. CHINESE LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER CALLS FOR U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN CONTRAST WITH RECENT GOM STATEMENTS DISASSOCIATING THE U.S. FROM A SECURITY ROLE IN SOUTHEAST

ASIA, ESPECIALLY ASEAN, A MARCH 8 EDITORIAL IN THE
INFLUENTIAL CHINESE-LANGUAGE "NANYANG SIANG PAU" CALLED
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ON THE U.S. TO ADOPT A FIRMER AND MORE EFFECTIVE
SOUTHEAST ASIAN POLICY. THE EDITORIAL MENTIONED THE
"CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE" IN THE U.S. BY HER ALLIES
RESULTING FROM THE VIETNAM WAR AND THE APPARENT TURN
TOWARD ISOLATIONISM IN THE U.S. AND RAISED THE QUESTION
OF THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AFTER
THE MARCH 20 WITHDRAWAL FROM THAILAND AT A TIME WHEN ANOTHER
MAJOR POWER HAS SUBJ OBVIOUS INTENTIONS TO FILL THE POWER
VACUUM. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDED BY HOPING THAT VP
ROCKEFELLER, DURING HIS VISIT TO THE REGION, WILL "SHOW
SERIOUS CONCERN OVER THE NEW SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA."

(COMMENT: THIS EDITORIAL IS NOT EXACTLY IN LINE WITH
RECENT GOM PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS WHICH HAVE AVOIDED
ENDORSEMENT OF A U.S. SECURITY ROLE IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA; HOWEVER, IT SEEMS TO REFLECT WHAT THE EDITORS
FEEL IS THE PEKING STANCE ON THE SUBJECT, A COMMON
GUIDELINE ON CHINESE EDITORIAL COMMENT HERE.)

9. NEW ZEALAND DEPUTY PM TO VISIT MALAYSIA. NEW ZEALAND
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BRIAN TALBOYS WILL VISIT MALAYSIA
MARCH 19-22. MFA SPOKESMAN IN ANNOUNCING VISIT SAID
IT WAS PART OF HIS TOUR OF ASEAN COUNTRIES TO
REAFFIRM NZ SUPPORT FOR ASEAN. TALBOYS, ALSO MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND OVERSEAS TRADE IS SCHEDULED
MEET WITH PM HUSSEIN ONN, FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN
AND HOME MINISTER TAN SRI GHAZALI SHAFIE. HE ALSO IS
SCHEDULED TO VISIT VARIOUS VENTURES IN WHICH NZ HAS AN
INTEREST.
UNDERHILL

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